

Some interesting topic came up when we were talking. I am often asked what the meaning of my name is, what swami actually means and what the word guru means. I have talked a lot about the meaning of the word guru already and wrote much in my diary, too. Sometimes when I say to people that I am not a guru, they do not try to understand me but think or say 'Swami and guru, that is the same thing! It doesn't matter!' But it does. On the surface it may seem the same kind of word but it is not.

The meaning of these two words is different from each other. Guru means teacher. In any field. It would not be wrong if you said guru to your math teacher. But it can be wrong to say 'swami' to your math teacher.

I was then asked what the real meaning of 'swami' is. I said swami basically means owner. Anybody can be a swami, if he owns himself. That is what I always say. You should not be a follower, you should become Swami, you own yourself. Why does somebody else own you? If you become a follower, it means somebody owns you because that person can decide for you what you will do next. It is not you anymore. I would like to see that you are brave enough to take your own responsibility.

Ramona also looked the word 'swami' up on Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swami>) and they write as a definition of Swami: "He who knows and is master of himself". And that is what I always say: you should become master of yourself, why should somebody else become your master and why would you need to be a follower?

Anybody can be a Swami. People see me and I look spiritual to them and that is how here, too, many people just say Swami to me without knowing me. But you cannot say Guru Ji to everybody. Guru is not a title, it is a relation like brother or father. Swami is a title for a spiritual person, like you would say Mister to someone else. This is the difference in the words Swami and Guru. For me it doesn't matter, many people call me Balendu, too, and I love it. Others call me Swami Balendu since long time and I don't really care about it, either. I have not changed this but the image of the guru I have left behind. Why would a title matter? It is just the love with which someone talks to me, no matter if he addresses me with my first name or the title 'swami'. So call me as you want but please call me with love.

